



AMEC Communication Effectiveness Awards 2009

A Job Well Done For HomeServe

Company Name: Media Measurement Ltd (MML)

Client/Campaign: HomeServe - One Contact Launch

Category: Best Use of Communication Measurement: Business-to-Consumer

Objective/Brief:

HomeServe already offered warranties and emergency repairs in the home through a range of partners and had built up a network of approved tradesmen. The company took the decision to utilise this network by launching a 'jobs on demand' service, *One Contact*, aimed at consumers, in which householders could book HomeServe tradesmen to undertake jobs around the home. HomeServe approached Media Measurement Ltd (MML) to evaluate the effectiveness of the PR element of an integrated marketing communications campaign for a pilot of the service in the West Midlands (September to December 2008). MML was chosen for its objectivity, its ability to provide both quantitative and qualitative analysis and its 95% repeatability of the analysis.

The key objective of the integrated marketing communications campaign was to:-

- 1) **Sell 6,000 jobs in the West Midlands region between October and December 2008**

To support this campaign the specific objectives were to:

- 2) **Identify the PR activities which produced the best Return on Investment (ROI) and therefore be included in the strategy for a nationwide roll-out**
- 3) **Generate at least ten items across three major West Midland's publications during the pilot**

Strategy:

In conjunction with HomeServe, PR agency Citigate developed a campaign to target West Midlands' householders and raise awareness about the new service. A number of PR methods were used to identify which were the most effective in terms of coverage and the most efficient in terms of spend. These were a media release and briefing announcing the launch, journalist trials, and a series of promotions and competitions, all of which aimed to **raise awareness of the service and to encourage potential customers to book jobs**. The PR Team was to support this objective by **raising awareness of the One Contact Service, influencing potential customers to enquire about the service and encouraging them to book jobs**.

The provision of a variety of methods would enable the Team to make **informed decisions about the strategy for a nationwide roll-out**. MML's role was to provide thorough and insightful evaluation so that the Team would have a platform to work from.

To achieve this end the PR Team sought to generate **at least ten items across three major West Midlands publications** (Express & Star, Birmingham Post and Birmingham Mail) during the pilot. Also, they wanted to communicate the benefits of the new service effectively through promoting a number of Key Messages. The target was for **80% of items to include at least one Key Message**. In particular, the PR Team sought to highlight the problems associated with using local tradesmen and needed to ensure that HomeServe was positioned as providing a solution to these issues. The aim was to secure coverage of the results of market research highlighting the problems with local tradesmen in the key West Midlands publications.

The media items for analysis spanned a range of media types, including print, online and broadcast outlets. The PR Team agreed to prioritise West Midlands regional media outlets, targeting its media releases, promotions and advice columns at specific publications, to achieve maximum publicity with potential consumers of the new service. The client constructed a list of Key Messages ([Appendix 1](#)) which it communicated to West Midlands householders, via the media, to promote consumer awareness of the new service and its benefits.

Execution/Implementation:

A MML Account Manager worked in tandem with HomeServe's PR Team to guarantee a mutual understanding of the project objectives. MML's Research Team conducted desk research, ensuring a thorough understanding of the brand, this together with information from HomeServe's PR plan, regarding the campaign and evaluation criteria, helped produce the Key Message Matrix which was divided into core Themes which was used to track the appearance of messages relating to HomeServe.

The PR Team wanted to compare the campaign **outcomes** to the PR and marketing plan, so evaluation results were tracked weekly to allow easy comparison ([Appendix 2](#)). A weekly chart showed the volume of items for the HomeServe launch campaign and the PR activities which were the key drivers of coverage. It demonstrated the

volume of items published from 15th to 28th September, when PR office activity was the sole marketing communications activity, and afterwards, when other marketing activities also took place. MML used existing research on the number of enquiries and jobs booked by the HomeServe call centre to benchmark these results against the volume of media items. The information was used to show whether activity from the **PR Team could be linked to actual business outcomes and assess its contribution to the objective of booking 6,000 jobs.**

Measures were used to evaluate the media coverage which referred to the *One Contact* service e.g. the tracking of media outlets, media types, journalists and sources, circulation, reach, and volume of items, to build up a comprehensive picture of the outcomes of its campaign against the PR investment. This would allow HomeServe to make **informed decisions about the strategy for a nationwide roll-out of the service**, especially with regards to the shape and elements to include within the strategy. The evaluation was seen as critical as it would be the catalyst for the choice of any future PR activity. MML tracked coverage resulting from each PR activity to show which was the most effective in terms of volume, tone and messages.

Regular updates to HomeServe were part of the process to change strategy if the outcomes were not as planned. Monthly Report Cards were produced for the four months following the launch in September 2008, plus an in-depth report covering the full campaign. Key Messages were tracked by both their tone and number of times they appeared, the Report also identified both the PR activity that produced the individual coverage and whether they appeared in the targeted Publications. This meant the Team would be able to identify which PR activity was most successful in promoting each of the Key Messages.

Conclusions:

The results of the evaluation were communicated at an inter-departmental forum. MML's research was praised for being **'incredibly valuable to the PR Team,' providing 'independent, qualitative commentary'** which supported the quantitative aspects of the reporting.

1. MML's research showed that, as part of the integrated marketing communications campaign, **the PR element had an important part to play in contributing to the objective of booking 6,000 jobs during the pilot.** The results showed a correlation between the volume of media items prompted by PR activity and the business outcomes (enquiries received and jobs booked) ([Appendix 3.1](#) and [3.2](#)). The first three weeks of the campaign, when there was a high volume of PR activity, produced the best results (see [Appendix 2](#)). This information enabled the HomeServe PR Team to show stakeholders that there were real benefits from investing more resources in PR.

2. **Journalist Trials** were identified by MML as being the most effective PR activity for achieving beneficial coverage, accounting for **18%** of the total ([Appendix 4](#)). **Research Based Media Releases/Interviews** were the most productive, accounting for **42%** of all items ([Appendix 5](#)). Strategically, the results highlighted a number of areas for improvement when planning the nationwide roll-out e.g. rather than focusing all resources on the initial launch phase they showed that more sustained PR activity would result in continued exposure ([Appendix 2](#)). Weekly evaluation feedback to the PR Team would enable tactical changes to achieve the required outcomes. The research clearly highlighted the most effective PR methods, enabling the Team to allocate future budgets based on research data. Extra investment of resources is planned for the future strategic plan.

3. The Team successfully met its objective of **generating ten media items in the three major West Midlands publications** and its objective of previous research highlighting problems with tradesmen appearing in five West Midlands media outlets. The objective for **80%** of media items to contain at least one Key Message was exceeded, with **81%** being achieved ([Appendix 6](#)). The most successful Key Message, **HomeServe undertakes tradesmen jobs in the home**, was mentioned in **78%** of the total items ([Appendix 7](#)). The campaign was most effective in the West Midlands target region; **54%** of the total items featured in regional priority media outlets ([Appendix 8](#)). The Team also successfully spread the campaign messages further afield, which had the added bonus of preparing the ground for the roll-out and reinforced the importance of informative, relevant market research as a promotional tool.

Emma Harvey, Director of Communications at HomeServe, said of the research; **'It has helped provide independent intelligence which proves the value of the PR Team as part of an integrated marketing campaign. It has highlighted the incredible value of PR as part of the mix, which has led to a desire for the business to up weight the use of PR in the next phase of the project.'**